rich-biodiversity and natural environment of the area. The scientist is also reported to have expressed concern about the depleted forest cover in Rajasthan generally.

The Government of India issued a notification on 7th May, 1992 regulating developmental activities in the Aravalli Ranges of Alwar District of Rajasthan and Gurgaon District of Haryana. This notification does not ban any activity. The notification was issued as per Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Rules made thereunder, after hearing representations from the State Governments concerned, Industry and Mining associations, NGOs etc.

Besides the Ministry has also taken up an afforestation programme in the Aravallis with Japanese assistance.

It is Government's endeavour to hear all parties who have relevant views to express on such matters, and suitable ameliorative action is taken whenever necessary.

Deforestation and Destruction of Forest in Bihar

3870. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that deforestation and destruction of forests is still continuing in Bihar; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what remedial, measures are taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No Report has been received regarding large scale deforestation and destruction of forest areas in Bihar. State of Forest Report published by Forest Survey of India shows no change in actual forest cover for 1989 and 1991 assessments in Bihar.

(b) The steps taken by Government to check illegal felling of trees are given as under:—

(i) The National Forest Policy, 1988, lays more emphasis on conservation of forest. There are specific provisions for protection of forests from grazing, fires and encroachment.

(ii) Forest (Conservation) Act was enacted in 1980 to check diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. The Act has been made more stringent by an amendment in 1988.

(iii) A centrally sponsored scheme is under implementation to help the States to develop infrastructure for protection of forests.

(iv) Import Policy for timber has been liberalised.

(v) Export of timber has been banned.

Denudation of Chhotanagpur Hills in Bihar

3871. SHRI RAM DEO BHANDARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the hills of Chhotanagpur, Santhal Parganas and Palamu Divisions of Bihar have been mercilessly denuded;

(b) whether it is a fact that this has caused ecological and environmental imbalances; and

(c) if so, what corrective measures Government are taking and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No report of merciless denudation of the hills of Chhotanagpur, Santhal Parganas and Palamu Division of Bihar has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The various steps taken by the Government to ensure preservation and sustainable exploitation of forest in order to maintain environmental balance are:—

(i) National Forest Policy 1988 lays more emphasis on conservation of forests. There are specific provisions for protection of forests from grazing, fires and encroachment.

(ii) Forest (Conservation), Act was enacted in 1980 to check diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. The Act has been made more stringent by an amendment in 1988.

(iii) Efforts have been made to give a renewed thrust upon afforestation works from Seventh Plan period.

(iv) States/Union Territories have been